

Winter 2002

COM Outlook Winter 2001-2002

College of Osteopathic Medicine

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NSUWorks Citation

College of Osteopathic Medicine, "COM Outlook Winter 2001-2002" (2002). *COM Outlook*. Book 43.
http://nsuworks.nova.edu/hpd_com_outlook/43

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COM OUTLOOK



College of Osteopathic Medicine

Winter 2001-2002
Volume 3, Number 1

Hell on Earth: A Trip to Ground Zero - Page 18

Dr. Elaine Wallace, so deeply moved by the tragic events that unfolded on September 11, embarked on an emotional and unforgettable medical mission to New York City.

Also inside this issue:

Looking Back with
Dr. Howard Neer
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Dr. Robin McFee
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"God Bless New York."



DEAN'S MESSAGE



On September 11, the United States experienced the true essence of hatred when a ruthless series of terrorist attacks devastated the lives of countless individuals and instilled fear in the hearts of millions of American citizens. While it's apparent these unconscionable acts were perpetrated to ravage our economy, generate dissension and fear, and undermine the country's

collective confidence, the attacks also served to showcase the unflagging fortitude that defines our great nation.

As a health professional, it was with great pride that I witnessed the noble actions of our students, faculty and staff, and the emergency relief workers in the days and weeks following the appalling tragedy. Who will soon forget the surreal footage one brave doctor captured with his video camera as the debris from one of the collapsing towers rained down upon him and the courageous New York firefighters and police officers? Stumbling his way through the murky streets, his thoughts remained focused not on his own welfare but on helping those injured or trapped in the nightmarish aftermath.

As you will read in the pages of this month's issue of *COM Outlook*, members of the NSU-COM family also played an integral role in assisting with the relief efforts, from sacrificing their own safety to provide much-needed medical aid to raising funds for the grieving victims' families.

Like countless other Americans, Dr. Elaine Wallace, who chairs our Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice, witnessed the carnage unfold on national television. Driven by a sense of duty, she immediately jumped in her car and drove to New York, spending several days working as a medical volunteer near Ground Zero.

Others, like M-2 student Michael Ferraro, made a difference by banding together with peers to create commemorative red, white, and blue ribbons and raise money for the victims' families. And then there was M-4 student Ashley Kumar, who requested and received permission from the college to take a two-week hiatus from her elective rotations to fly to New York and participate in American Red Cross counseling efforts

taking place for individuals impacted by the World Trade Center attacks.

Our students have also showcased incredible emotional strength and restraint, which is especially impressive when you consider they had never witnessed a war, let alone a devastating terrorist assault on American soil before that fateful September morning. Following the attacks, there was concern that some students would redirect their anger toward people who were as innocent as the individuals who senselessly lost their lives. Fortunately, that never occurred as students from all the NSU-HPD colleges pulled together, supported each other, and found ways to positively channel their anger, frustration, and energy.

Additionally, our faculty calmly sprang into action as soon as news of the attacks spread throughout the various HPD auditoriums. When one student was found crying in the bathroom, consumed with fear because both her parents worked in the World Trade Center towers, a crisis intervention professional was brought in to deal with the outpouring of anxiety. An M.B.S. student, who served as a crisis counselor during the Oklahoma City bombings in 1995, volunteered her services to the college, while Dr. Daniel Shaw, our behavioral education specialist, wandered the Terry Building with other faculty to counsel distressed students.

On a national level, the health care industry rose masterfully to the occasion as medical practitioners came together, flooding into the stricken areas to offer help. Fittingly, you had the \$200,000-a-year physician and the minimum wage EMS professional working side-by-side as volunteers to save people's lives. When it really counted, health care professionals disregarded their own safety concerns and did whatever was necessary to assist humanity.

It's in times of crisis that the true instinct of health professionals shines through. The perpetrators of these hideous attacks may have represented humanity at its very worst, but as we have witnessed, the world is full of caring souls who countered that repugnance with an immediate outpouring of concern, love, and unqualified support.

God bless America...and all its citizens.

Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D.
Dean



HPD Executive Administration

Communiqué



*Dr. Morton Terry, D.O., M.Sc., FACOI
Chancellor*



*Fred Lippman, B.Sc., R.Ph.
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost*

As we reflect back over the past year and specifically, since September 11, the executive administration of the Health Professions Division would like to commend The College of Osteopathic Medicine for its immediate and impeccable implementation of a multi-tiered crisis response plan. Dean Silvagni and his faculty and staff displayed great strength and sensitivity as the magnitude of these horrific events unfolded. Attending to our students' fears and anxieties was priority number one; community safety, number two. NSU-COM took a leadership role in a series of initiatives designed to train physicians, EMS, and other health care professionals in the appropriate emergency response to bioterrorism threats. On December 1 and 2, the college, working closely with the health departments of Miami-Dade, Broward, and West Palm Beach counties, hosted two bioterrorism seminars. The program included a presentation by Dr. Martin Levine, who spent considerable time in Ground Zero. The conference was funded, in part, by a \$15,000 grant from Bayer Pharmaceuticals.

The educational programs offered by NSU-COM at the West Palm Beach Veterans Administration Medical Center continue to grow and develop. A new surgical training rotation for third-year students was recently developed and will commence in the upcoming academic year. A disbursement agreement to provide reimbursement for the

equivalent of two full-time preventive medicine residents was consummated with the VA. These residents have been rotating at the facility since July of this academic year. This agreement will be ongoing and will allow us to support these two positions in the coming years.

The new NSU Student Health Center, under the direction of Dr. Sandi Scott-Holman, is now open. We are most pleased to have a facility, dedicated exclusively to students. Same-day appointments with student-only examination rooms enable us to provide the personalized and immediate attention our students deserve.

On November 10, we celebrated the opening of NSU's Women's Health Center, under the direction of Dr. Kenneth Johnson. A luncheon, sponsored by Wyeth-Ayerst Pharmaceutical, introduced invited guests to our new center. Dr. Renee Alexis, who recently joined the OB/GYN faculty, will team with Dr. Johnson for the clinical responsibilities and patient care at the center.

And finally, the HPD executive administration would like to wish all of our faculty, students, staff, and alumni a safe, healthy, productive, and happy new year. It is our deepest wish that "Peace on Earth, Good Will Towards Men" would indeed become our reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Morton Terry, D.O.".

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fred Lippman".

FEATURES

A publication of
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All articles are written by Scott Colton, Director of Education Communications, unless otherwise indicated

NSU-COM Launches Terrorism Taskforce – 10

Due to the recent rash of anthrax-related diagnoses and deaths both locally and nationwide, NSU-COM has joined forces with local experts to form an ongoing Taskforce on Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Looking Back with Dr. Howard Neer – 14

Over the past five decades, Dr. Howard Neer has successfully traversed all avenues of the osteopathic profession, from opening a flourishing family medicine practice to serving as president of the American Osteopathic Association.

Hell on Earth: A Trip to Ground Zero – 18

Like most Americans, Dr. Elaine Wallace watched in disbelief as the surreal terrorist attacks unfolded in Technicolor horror on September 11. Moved by a profound sense of duty, Dr. Wallace immediately jumped in her car and proceeded northward to battle-scarred New York to assist in the medical relief efforts.

Terrorist Attacks Spark Patriotic Acts – 20

Spurred by a wave of patriotism, NSU-COM students banded together to show their concern—and raise money—for the grieving family members who lost loved ones in the terrorist attacks.

Kumar's Compassion Benefits Beleaguered New Yorkers – 21

As an American Red Cross volunteer, M-4 student Ashley Kumar had gone through her fair share of disaster preparedness training. So when disciples of Osama bin Laden destroyed the iconic twin towers of the World Trade Center, Kumar immediately sprang into action.

Poisonous Pedigree Proves Opportune for Dr. Robin McFee – 22

When Dr. Robin McFee joined NSU-COM's Department of Preventive Medicine last summer as an assistant professor, one of her goals was to help the college develop a center of excellence in adolescent health and research. But sometimes life throws a monkey wrench into even the best-laid plans, which is exactly what happened on a fateful September morning.

Rural Medicine Program Develops Concerned, Committed Physicians – 24

Since its establishment in 1979, the Department of Rural Medicine has added many components to a program that is continually fine-tuned and adapted to stay abreast of medical advances that help meet the growing needs of an ever-changing underserved population.

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NEWS BRIEFS



Sherri Martin, B.S.

In September, Sherri Martin, B.S., joined NSU-COM's growing family of staff and faculty in the role of grants/special projects coordinator. This newly created position provides support for the development and administration of university grant activity. Mrs. Martin is the wife of Ronnie Martin, D.O., who serves as professor and chair of the Department of Family Medicine.

According to recent American Osteopathic Association (AOA) statistics, osteopathic medical school enrollment exploded 53 percent to 10,388 at 19 schools in 2000 from 6,792 at 15 schools in 1990. With the number of osteopathic physicians increasing more than two times faster than allopathic physicians, the AOA projects that by the year 2010 there will be 70,000 osteopathic physicians—a 49 percent increase from the 47,000 now practicing. While osteopathic physicians comprise only 6 percent of the nation's total physicians, some 64 percent are primary care physicians. They also represent 15 percent of the total numbers of physicians in towns of 10,000 or less.

The Florida Medical Association Alliance (FMAA) recently contributed \$3,411 to NSU-COM's Foundation Scholars and Medical School of Excellence funds. The endowment represents contributions made by FMAA volunteers through fundraising activities and personal contributions.

On October 12, NSU-COM held its annual Track Day, which allows M-2 students to mingle with representatives from



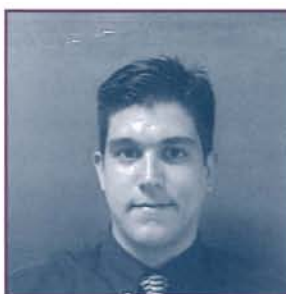
Elaine Lefkowitz, NSU-COM director of clinical education; Glenn E. Bigsby, III, D.O., director of medical education, Florida Hospital - East Orlando and CEME president; and M-2 student Michael Ferraro.



Students obtained valuable information about their third-year core rotations from facilities like the Osteopathic Institute of the South and Sun Coast Hospital.

the Consortium for Excellence in Medical Education (CEME) and other medical institutions to discuss third-year core rotation possibilities.

In December, the NSU-COM Pediatrics Club coordinated its Annual Holiday Toy Drive for underserved children. Working with Family Central, the club adopted three daycare centers and collected toys from students, faculty, and staff for approximately 200 children. Club members crafted a decorative holiday wagon with a tree adorned with an ornament for each child, featuring information such as age, sex, and a gift wish list. The week after Thanksgiving, participants were afforded an opportunity to pick a child from the tree and purchase a gift from the wish list. The presents were then wrapped at a dinner function held in the HPD Dining Room and delivered to the three daycare centers the week before Christmas by Pediatric Club members.



M-1 Student Alberto Caban

In November, M-1 student Alberto Caban was elected student working group chair of the American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA). Caban, who is one of the few osteopathic students affiliated with the organization, will be responsible for representing 600 AMIA student members who are in bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs in medical informatics and medicine.

The Consortium for Excellence in Medical Education (CEME), which was formed in 1999 to increase opportunities for postdoctoral medical training throughout the Southeast, recently welcomed two additional programs into its growing alliance: They are:

- Duke University/Southern Regional AHEC Family Medicine Residency in Fayetteville, North Carolina
- Louisiana State University (LSU) Health Sciences Center Family Practice Residency Program at Lake Charles Memorial Hospital in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

During the AOA Convention and Scientific Seminar in October, three NSU-COM students organized a side trip to the renowned Osteopathic Center for Children in San Diego, which is an ambulatory clinical facility for the treatment of children and their families. One of the center's staff physicians, Brett P. Thomas, D.O., who happens to be an NSU-COM graduate (class of 1990), spent an hour touring the students around the facility and discussing the merits of the

NEWS BRIEFS



Posing outside the Osteopathic Center for Children is Dr. Thomas with NSU-COM students Cheryl Kohn, Christie Campbell, and Joanna Greenblatt.

osteopathic profession. The students also had the honor of meeting the center's director, Viola Fryman, D.O., who is considered a living legend of osteopathic medical leadership by her peers.

Robert Perraud, D.O.
Debra Cohn Steinkohl, M.H.S.A.

5 Years of Service

Sultan Ahmed, M.D.
Ricardo Arriaza
Irene Borges
Cassandra Fulton
Peter Cohen, D.O.
Dominique Esposito
Kenneth Johnson, D.O.
Frederick Lewis, D.O.
Lawrence Newbree, M.S.
Robert Oller, D.O.
Sandi Scott-Holman, D.O.
Margaret Wilkinson, Ph.D.

During the research portion of the AOA Convention, 1988 NSU-COM alumnus Tyler Cymet, D.O., discussed his clinical study entitled "Erundu-Cymet Syndrome: Survivability of 46 XY, inv(21) (q11.2q22.1)."



NSU-COM representatives pose in front of the North Broward Hospital District's Mammovan.

NSU-COM students showcased their community spirit by providing free health screenings at the Seventh Annual Community Health in the Park Fair, held October 20 at Carter Park in Fort Lauderdale. The health fair, which was

coordinated by the Community Health Education Alliance, Inc., provided attendees an opportunity to be screened for ailments such as breast cancer, diabetes, hypertension, asthma, high cholesterol, and prostate cancer.

In November 1992, NSU-COM alumnus David V. Glorius, D.O., medical director of the FL 3 DMAT (Disaster Medical Assistance Team) and The Florida State Fire College, was deployed to the World Trade Center Ground Zero site to be in charge of two first-aid stations still being provided by New York City to care for the remaining military, police, fire, and construction personnel.

On December 13, Nova Southeastern University held its annual Employee Anniversary Luncheon at the Signature Grand in Davie to recognize staff and faculty members who have reached significant employment milestones. Following are the College of Osteopathic Medicine honorees:

15 Years of Service

Fred Lippman, B.Sc., R.Ph.
Marysel Morales

10 Years of Service

Howard Neer, D.O.

Top 10 Colleges & Universities in South Florida

According to a survey published in the *South Florida Business Journal*, Nova Southeastern University is the sixth largest college/university in the tri-county area based on total projected fall 2001 enrollment figures. Following are the top 10 educational institutions listed in the survey:

1. Miami-Dade Community College	48,950 students
2. Broward Community College	33,500 students
3. Florida International University	32,500 students
4. Palm Beach Community College	27,000 students
5. Florida Atlantic University	24,000 students
6. Nova Southeastern University	19,300 students
7. University of Miami	13,500 students
8. Barry University	8,899 students
9. Keiser College	4,200 students
10. The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale	3,474 students

SOMA Chapter Preaches HIV Prevention Message

In October, 30 members of the NSU-COM chapter of the Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) received training from the American Red Cross concerning how to present data to youth on HIV prevention. Over the next several months, SOMA members will be imparting vital HIV/AIDS information to high school students throughout Broward and Miami-Dade via its Students Teaching AIDS to Students Program.

In addition, to commemorate October as AIDS Awareness Month, SOMA members held a raffle and raised over \$100 for the HIV Pediatrics Clinic in West Palm Beach. The clinic's director, Greta Stiebel Chin, M.D., who serves as one of the college's participating IGC doctors, reciprocated the students'

NEWS BRIEFS



M-3 Student Kasey Nelson

generosity by presenting an insightful lecture on HIV and pediatrics to SOMA members. In other SOMA news, M-3 student Kasey Nelson earned a prestigious honor when he was named national SOMA president during the organization's national conference, held October 18-21 in San Diego, California.

AHEC Program Funding Hits New Milestone

NSU-COM's Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program will be receiving over \$3.7 million in overall external funding from federal and state grants and contracts in the 2001-02 fiscal year. This figure represents the largest annual allocation received in the program's 17-year history and signifies a sizable 22 percent increase over last year's funding level of approximately \$3 million.

Since AHEC's inception in 1985, the program has received over \$34 million in total yearly awards. Following are the funding sources and monies awarded for 2001-02:

Federal Model AHEC Grant

Increased from \$156,333 to \$210,186

(Funded through the U.S. Public Health Service/Health Resources and Services Administration)

Federal Statewide Florida Border HETC Grant

Increased from \$489,435 to \$572,520

(Funded through the U.S. Public Health Service and HRSA)

State AHEC Contract

Increased from \$2,271,359 to \$2,966,253

(Funded through the Florida Department of Health)

Smith Allegro to Receive Living Tribute Award



Mary Smith Allegro

Mary Smith Allegro, who serves as coordinator of student services, will be the inaugural recipient of the NSU-COM Alumni Association Living Tribute Award. The accolade, which will be presented to Smith Allegro on February 2, 2002, during the Sixth Annual Alumni Reunion and Continuing Medical Education Program, provides graduates an opportunity to honor outstanding faculty/staff members and administrators who have made

significant contributions to the college and the osteopathic profession.

Over the past 40 years, Smith Allegro has shared a nurturing bond with the osteopathic profession, starting with her affiliation with Osteopathic General Hospital in 1961 (the forerunner of NSU-COM) to her current role in the Office of Student Services. During the evolution of what has become known as the NSU Health Professions Division, Smith Allegro served as registrar at Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine and at Southeastern University of the Health Sciences. In 1995, she received the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association's prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award for her countless contributions to the osteopathic profession. To date, Smith Allegro is the first and only non-D.O. to receive this lofty honor.

Student Health Center Debuts at Ziff Clinic

On November 12, NSU students had something to celebrate when the long-awaited Student Health Center opened its doors on the first floor of the Sanford L. Ziff Health Care Center. The center, which features six patient rooms, allows students to utilize facilities specifically geared to their needs.



"During the center's planning stages, we met with representatives of the Student Government Association to solicit their input," said Sandi Scott-Holman, D.O., who serves as director of the Student Health Center and medical director of the Sanford L. Ziff Health Care Center. "Because of their class schedules, they felt it would be beneficial to have clinic hours that better suited their needs."

The Student Health Center, which is open Monday through Friday from noon until 7:00 p.m., utilizes a same-day appointment schedule, with follow-up appointments scheduled accordingly. Walk-ins are accepted, but appointments are encouraged to maintain a smooth patient flow.

The student clinic will be staffed by:

- Sandi Scott-Holman, D.O., director and physician
- Paula Anderson-Worts, D.O., physician

News Briefs/Student Health Center continued on next page

NEWS BRIEFS

- Derin Davila, medical assistant for student health
- April Starker, B.S., student health center coordinator, who previously spent five years working in the University of Florida's student health center

To schedule an appointment at the NSU Student Health Center, please call 262-4HPD.

Sigma Sigma Phi Maintains Active Community Presence



The DDoctor's Bag Program was recently accorded two awards by Family Central, a family service provider that houses daycare centers in Broward and Miami-Dade. NSU-COM's Sigma Sigma Phi Chapter was named "Best Service Project of the Year," while Nova Southeastern University was selected as "Best Service-oriented University of the Year."

The NSU-COM Sigma Sigma Phi Xi Chapter continues to set a high standard for student organizations in terms of its involvement in community activities and outreach. Thanks to the efforts of several Sigma Sigma Phi

members, who are currently conducting their third-year rotations at various Florida sites, the fraternity's acclaimed DDoctor's Bag Program has expanded into Daytona Beach, Tampa, Miami, and Orlando.

The program, which helps alleviate fears of underserved children as they relate to seeking health care, will soon be spreading nationwide with the help of NSU-COM Sigma Sigma Phi members, who made an impressive presentation to the other osteopathic colleges at the AOA Convention and Scientific Seminar in



The DDoctor's Bag Program in action.

October. "Eight members from NSU-COM went to the convention, and we presented all of our programs, with a special emphasis on setting up the DDoctor's Bag Program at the other osteopathic medical schools," said Danielle Stigger, who serves as president of NSU-COM's Sigma Sigma Phi

Chapter. "All of the schools were interested, and the national Sigma Sigma Phi office will be allocating money to us to help make this happen. By the spring of 2002, I anticipate this program will be up and running all over the United States."

The success of the DDoctor's Bag Program recently prompted Sigma Sigma Phi members to develop a new program called Pre-Doc that involves going into area high schools and

providing an interactive lesson in medicine. "So far, we have done this program at two inner-city schools, and the response we have received has been incredible,"

Stigger said. "The students get so involved and take an interest in medicine. I think this program will eventually be even larger than the DDoctor's Bag Program because we are not only spreading osteopathic awareness but also providing role models for these students."



Sigma Sigma Phi members kick off the Pre-Doc Program at Boyd Anderson High School.

The fraternity has also formed a strong bond with a homeless shelter called Broward County Partnership for Families. In addition to conducting the DDoctor's Bag Program at the shelter, chapter members helped raise \$600 to feed isolated and lonely shelter residents during the Thanksgiving holidays.

AOA President Visits NSU-COM

James Zini, D.O., president of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), paid a recent visit to the College of Osteopathic Medicine to speak to the students about issues such as postgraduate medical education opportunities and the symbiotic role the AOA can play throughout their medical careers. Dr. Zini plans to visit all 19 osteopathic medical schools during his tenure as AOA president.



Dean Silvagni and Dr. Zini (bottom row, second from right) pose with NSU-COM Student Government Association officers.

NSU-COM to Play Active Role in Glades Health Fair

On February 16, 2002, approximately 70 NSU-COM students and faculty members will participate in a multidisciplinary health fair targeting Belle Glade and surrounding communities served by NSU's Area Health Education Center (AHEC) and Florida Border Health Education and Training Center (HETC) programs.

The College of Osteopathic Medicine will play a major role in the inaugural Glades Rural Education, Awareness, and Community Health (REACH) Fair, which will be held at Glades Central High School and feature input from other NSU-HPD colleges. Over the past few years, NSU-COM students and faculty have participated in a successful series of international medical missions to Guatemala, Haiti, and Jamaica; however, the students have expressed a strong desire to deliver similar community services in their own backyard.

The fair is being cosponsored by an array of organizations, including NSU's Health Professions Division and its AHEC/HETC programs, NSU-COM's American Medical Student Association (AMSA) Chapter, Planned Approach to Community Health (PATCH), Palm Beach County Health Department, and Glades Central High School.

NSU-COM faculty and students will utilize 21 classrooms to perform comprehensive examinations and screenings for a patient population estimated to exceed 500 children and adults. The makeshift medical unit will consist of a registration station, a vitals and triage post, 12 exam rooms, and 2 lab stations. Each area will be under the supervision of a licensed physician as well as other appropriately trained

individuals. Funding for the necessary medical supplies is being provided through PATCH and NSU's HETC Program.

Camille Bentley, D.O., assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine and HETC medical coordinator, will oversee the volunteer project that will comprise approximately 50 NSU-COM students and 20 full-time and adjunct faculty members with active medical licenses in the South Florida area. "I'm very excited about the prospect of providing this type of health care to a primarily indigent South Florida community," said Dr. Bentley, who envisions the pilot program growing into a multi-day event next year. "It's an excellent addition to our community outreach efforts."

The NSU-COM portion of the health fair will be organized in a manner similar to the one incorporated during the various medical missions to Guatemala. The students will be supervised by physicians and work in two half-day shifts, spending half their time performing physical examinations and the other portion working in the lab or providing health care education to the attendees. During the examination process, patients will participate in a range of tests, including urinalysis and blood sugar, cholesterol, and parasitic screenings.

"Our students and faculty deserve to be commended for going above and beyond the call of duty and devoting their spare time to this local medical mission," said Dr. Bentley, who applauded the coordination skills of NSU-COM AMSA President Shalomi George. "It's a joint effort that will have a positive and profound impact on many lives."



Discussing plans for the upcoming Glades Health Fair are (from left): Steven Zucker, D.M.D., M.Ed., associate dean for community affairs and AHEC director; Jessie Legros, M.P.H., HETC statewide administrator; and Dr. Bentley.

NSU-COM Launches Terrorism Taskforce

Due to the recent rash of anthrax-related diagnoses and deaths both locally and nationwide, NSU-COM has joined forces with local experts to form an ongoing Taskforce on Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction. The taskforce, which will focus on education, training, and research, comprises a mix of faculty members as well as Southeast Florida health leaders who are well versed in preventive medicine and public health issues.

The taskforce's first order of business was to coordinate a two-day seminar, held December 1-2, in the Steele Auditorium of NSU's Health Professions Division. The December 1 forum, entitled Physicians' Response to Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction, targeted the physician community and addressed chemical, biological, and radiological weapons of mass destruction.

The December 2 session, entitled First Responders' Role in Bioterrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction, was targeted toward law enforcement personnel and area health care professionals (i.e. paramedics, emergency medical technicians, and firefighters) who are likely to be the first responders in a massive bioterrorist attack.

The seminars, which were sponsored by NSU-COM, the Broward County Medical Association, and the Broward County Osteopathic Medical Association, addressed topics such as:

- The most common diseases associated with bioterrorism and other weapons of mass destruction.
- The natural history of anthrax, smallpox, tularemia, pneumonic plague, and botulism.
- Measures that should be used to prevent, diagnose, and manage diseases most associated with bioterrorism and weapons of mass destruction.
- The public agencies that should be contacted in the event of terrorist acts.
- How to provide accurate and appropriate information to the public and media about the diseases most associated with bioterrorism and weapons of mass destruction.
- Identifying and describing the methods employed for environmental decontamination.

The NSU-COM Taskforce on Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction currently comprises:

Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D.

Dean, College of Osteopathic Medicine

Leonard A. Levy, D.P.M., M.P.H.

Associate Dean, Education, Planning, and Research

Morton Morris, D.O., J.D.

Vice Chancellor and Deputy Provost
Health Professions Division

Rosebud Foster, Ed.D.

Special Assistant to the Executive Vice Chancellor
and Provost, Health Professions Division and
Special Assistant to the AHEC Program Director

James Howell, M.D., M.P.H.

Chair, Department of Rural Medicine

Charles Lewis, M.P.H., PA-C

Assistant Professor, Master of Public Health Program

Steven Zucker, D.M.D., M.Ed.

Associate Dean, Community Affairs
and AHEC Program Director

Cyril Blavo, D.O., M.P.H.

Director, Master of Public Health Program

Jean M. Malecki, M.D., M.P.H.

Director, Palm Beach County Health Department
Chair, Department of Preventive Medicine

Robin McFee, D.O., M.P.H.

Assistant Professor, Department of Preventive Medicine

Kevin Nugent, REMT-P

Program Director, Department of EMS Education and Training

Joel Spalter, M.D.

Assistant Professor, Department of Internal Medicine

Robert Self, M.D.

Medical Executive Director
Broward County Health Department

Jim James, M.D.

Director, Miami-Dade County Health Department

Walter Livingstone, M.S., M.P.H.

Administrator, Office of Emergency Management
Miami-Dade County Health Department



Taskforce members discuss fundamental details at a November meeting.

Terrorism seminar photos featured on top half of next page



Marilyn Rizzo, executive assistant, Broward County Osteopathic Medical Association, and Cynthia Peterson, executive vice president, Broward County Medical Association, played an integral role in the success of the Physicians' Response to Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction seminar.



Speakers at the December 1 seminar included (from left): Eleni Sfakianaki, M.D., medical director, Miami-Dade County Health Department; Jean Malecki, M.D., M.P.H., director, Palm Beach County Health Department; and James Cresanta, M.D., senior physician/disease prevention, Broward County Health Department.

Women's Health Center Stages Grand Opening



Dr. Kenneth Johnson addresses the attendees during the Women's Day Luncheon.

To commemorate the grand opening of the NSU Women's Health Center, located on the third floor of the Sanford L. Ziff Health Care Center, a "Women's Day Luncheon" was coordinated on

November 10 for a select group of about 30 guests. The grand opening, which was sponsored by Wyeth-Ayerst Pharmaceuticals, featured lunch, a complimentary bone density screening for the attendees, and an update on women's health lecture by Kenneth Johnson, D.O. who serves as director of the Women's Health Center.

"The center's primary goals are to provide state-of-the-art health care for the female community of Broward County, offer comprehensive training for NSU-COM family practice residents, and serve as a core OB/GYN rotation site for third and fourth-year medical students," said Dr. Johnson, who also serves as vice chief of the Chris Evert Women's and Children Center.

The center, which features five examination rooms and employs a holistic approach to women's health care, offers patients a chance to take advantage of the clinic's ultra-modern medical equipment and participate in beneficial clinical trials in osteoporosis, contraception, and hormone-

replacement therapy. "We are also intimately involved in a three-year study with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention concerning ways to reduce the incidence of fetal alcohol syndrome—the number one preventable cause of birth defects in America," Dr. Johnson stated. "In fact, our Women's Health Center was recently selected as a site for a major multi-million dollar clinical trial, which will begin in January 2002 and allow 200 women to receive contraceptive and alcohol cessation counseling."

Although the center is still in its infancy, Dr. Johnson foresees a bright and productive future. "We've already been able to reach out to the community and expand knowledge in women's health," he noted. "We really see ourselves as a state-of-the-art, interdisciplinary center that is redefining approaches to women's health care in the new millennium."



The grand opening was coordinated by Ronnie Oller of Parties with Pizzazz and Sara Brenner, assistant vice chancellor for marketing and communications, Health Professions Division. Mrs. Oller is the wife of Robert Oller, D.O., who serves as chief executive officer of the NSU Health Care Centers.



Kenneth Johnson, D.O.

Kenneth Johnson, D.O., assistant professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and director of NSU's Women's Health Center, was a quoted expert in the October 2001 issue of *Pregnancy* magazine. Dr. Johnson's comments were featured in the article entitled "Double Delivery: Preparing for Twin Arrivals."



Jean Malecki, M.D., M.P.H.

On September 20, The Guatemalan-Maya Center in Lake Worth honored Jean Malecki, M.D., M.P.H., and Camille Bentley, D.O., for the work they do in providing health care outreach efforts to Palm Beach County's underserved Guatemalan-Maya community. Dr. Malecki, who chairs the college's Department of Preventive Medicine, was honored for the work she does as director of

the Palm Beach County Health Department. Dr. Bentley, assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine, was honored for coordinating ongoing medical missions to Guatemala and participating in the center's health fair. Dr. Malecki also received national television exposure in October when she appeared via satellite on several programs, including the *Today* show with Matt Lauer, to discuss the story of the 63-year-old Palm Beach County man who died from inhalation anthrax-related complications.



A. Alvin Greber, D.O.

A. Alvin Greber, D.O., professor and chair of the Department of Internal Medicine, recently received a plaque of appreciation from the Dade County Osteopathic Medical Association after concluding his three-year stint as president of the association. Dr. Greber received special commendation for serving an extra year as president, due to extenuating circumstances.



Marie and Morton Morris, D.O., J.D.

In October, Marie and Morton Morris, D.O., J.D., vice chancellor and deputy provost of the Health Professions Division, received the Donald Siehl Appreciation Award from the American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics (AOAO). The award is presented to members who, in the opinion of the AOAO Board of Directors, have made a

major contribution and commitment to the organization during their professional careers. The award is the highest honor granted by the academy.



Steven Zucker, D.M.D., M.Ed.

Steven Zucker, D.M.D., M.Ed., professor and associate dean for community affairs and director of the NSU-COM AHEC Program, was a contributor to the summer 2001 issue of *The National AHEC Bulletin*. His article centered on "Linkages of the Nova Southeastern University AHEC Program with Community and Migrant Health Centers in South and Central Florida."



Charlotte Paolini, D.O.

Charlotte Paolini, D.O., assistant professor and chair of the Division of Geriatrics, was a contributing author in the October 2001 issue of the *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*. Dr. Paolini's article, titled "Symptoms Management at the End of Life," covered issues such as palliative care, anorexia, cachexia, asthenia, and delirium.



Ronnie Martin, D.O.

Ronnie Martin, D.O., professor and chair of the Department of Family Medicine, served as co-convention chairman for the ACOFP at the 106th Annual AOA Convention and Scientific Seminar in San Diego, held October 21-25, and presented a lecture on "Men's Health" with Dean Silvagni during the symposium. Dr. Martin also presented a lecture on "Wellness

and Diabetes" as part of the student wellness lecture series, which is coordinated monthly by NSU's Office of Recreation and Wellness.

The recent bioterrorist outbreaks throughout the United States have made toxicology specialist Robin McFee, D.O., M.P.H., a



Robin McFee, D.O., M.P.H.

much sought after speaker. Over the past few months, Dr. McFee, assistant professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine, has presented a lecture on weapons of mass destruction to organizations such as the American Congress of Clinical Toxicology in Montreal, Canada, and the Broward County Health Department. She

also participated in a video teleconference organized through the North Broward Hospital District that was beamed to six area hospitals and viewed by more than 300 doctors, nurses, fire-rescue workers, and other health professionals.



Leonard Levy, D.P.M., M.P.H.

Leonard Levy, D.P.M., M.P.H., professor and associate dean of education, planning, and research, was the guest speaker at a recent luncheon hosted by the Rotary Club of Fort Lauderdale North at the Coral Ridge Yacht Club. Dr. Levy discussed biomedical ethics, including the principles governing medical conduct and the relationship of the physician to the patient, the patient's family, fellow physicians, and society at large.



Camille Bentley, D.O.

In November, Camille Bentley, D.O., assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine, was named medical coordinator of NSU-COM's Florida Border Health Education and Training Centers (HETC) Program. The HETC Program is a collaborative partnership of four of Florida's medical schools (NSU-COM, University of Florida, University of Miami, University of

South Florida) and their respective AHEC programs. Dr. Bentley will utilize her experience to provide medical outreach to immigrant and minority populations originating from Latin America and the Caribbean Basin who are currently residing in Florida. She will be collaborating with the other statewide HETC's on a wide range of health promotion/disease initiatives, including health fairs, community health worker training, and other HETC-related faculty and student projects.



Sandi Scott-Holman, D.O.

In October, Sandi-Scott-Holman, D.O., medical director of NSU's Sanford L. Ziff Health Care Center, appeared on WTVJ/NBC 6's Action Line segment with a panel of other health care experts to answer viewer phone calls concerning anthrax and other bioterrorist-related questions. During the newscast, Dr. Scott-Holman fielded an interesting array of questions,

including one viewer query regarding how long a piece of mail should be placed in a microwave to kill any possible anthrax spores. (Answer? Long enough for the mail to be warm to the touch.)

Michael M. Patterson, Ph.D., professor and assistant chair of the Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice, was a



Michael M. Patterson, Ph.D.

featured speaker at several October symposiums. During the AOA Convention, Dr. Patterson presented a lecture on "The Osteopathic Curriculum," to the Osteopathic Medical College Forum for Premed Advisors. At the October 25-27 Osteopathic Collaborative Clinical Trials Initiative Conference III, he provided an overview of the research initiatives currently taking place at NSU-COM. Dr. Patterson

concluded his trio of speaking engagements on October 28-29 when he presented a research design course to the fourth and fifth-year students at the Canadian College of Osteopathy in Toronto, Canada.



Jennie Q. Lou, M.D., M.Sc.

In November, Jennie Q. Lou, M.D. M.Sc., associate professor of public health, was appointed to the Medical Advisory Board by the National Multiple Sclerosis Foundation. Dr. Lou is also conducting a randomized controlled trial, funded by the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation, to study the effectiveness of wellness and rehabilitation programs for people

living with multiple sclerosis on their general health status and quality of life. In addition to co-authoring an array of articles and books in recent months, Dr. Lou was a speaker at the National Human Genetic Model Curricula Model Project Conference at Johns Hopkins University, where she discussed "Integrating Genetics into Current Curricula." She also served as the keynote speaker at the Rehabilitation Medicine in 21st Century Conference in Shanghai, China, where she spoke on "Evidence-based Practice in Rehabilitation of Neurological Disorders."

Stanley Cohen, Ed.D., vice provost of the Health Professions Division, and James Cox, D.O., assistant professor in the Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice, were quoted in an October 10 article featured in *City Link*. The article, entitled "Selling the Pharm," addressed the serious questions of ethics and patient care that arise when pharmaceutical companies cozy up to physicians.



Stanley Cohen, Ed.D.



James Cox, D.O.

Howard Neer, D.O. - Osteopathic Medicine's Respected Renaissance Man

By **Scott Colton**, Director of Education Communications

Beloved doctor. Savvy entrepreneur. Hospital founder. Osteopathic visionary. Respected leader. Faithful family man.

When it comes to describing Howard Neer, D.O., who serves as professor and associate dean of alumni affairs, the aforementioned phrases aptly encapsulate the essence of a man who has spent the past five decades furthering the cause of osteopathic medicine both statewide and nationally. Since relocating to Florida from Dayton, Ohio, in 1955, Dr. Neer has successfully traversed all avenues of the osteopathic profession, from opening a flourishing family medicine practice to serving as president of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA).

Growing up in Middletown, Ohio, Dr. Neer was exposed to health care at an early age, mainly because his father was a veterinarian who also served as health commissioner of Middletown. Still, despite that early introduction to the marvels of medicine, Dr. Neer harbored more typical teenage aspirations like becoming an adored football hero or a world-renowned drummer. However, when a rash of football-related injuries helped introduce him to the world of osteopathic medicine, a new career path was mapped out.

"I got interested in osteopathic medicine after I began playing high-school football," explained Dr. Neer, who soon found himself spending more time in a doctor's office than on the playing field. "I was 6'3" but only weighed 155 pounds. Because I was skinny as a rail, I got beat up pretty badly and kept dislocating my shoulder and experiencing back sprains. My dad



Howard Neer, D.O.

sent me to a D.O. who would fix me up in one treatment, but then two weeks later, I'd be back with another injury. When it kept happening, I decided to give up my football career. But that exposure got me interested in osteopathic medicine, and that's when I decided to become a D.O."

After receiving his premed degree from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, Dr. Neer matriculated at Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine, earning his D.O. degree in 1954. Following his one-year internship at Grandview Hospital in Dayton, Dr. Neer and his wife Gloria, who he began dating during his first year at Miami University, decided to leave the chilly Northeast for the sun-kissed state of Florida. "I had always wanted to live in a warm climate, so when the time was right I contacted the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (FOMA) about potential practice opportunities," he explained. "I was directed to a very needy area north of Tampa called Lutz, so Gloria and I moved there in August of 1955 and opened a practice. We moved into a house and used the living room for a waiting room, the bedroom for the examining room, and the family room as our bedroom."

In the mid 1950's, Central Florida consisted of little more than cattle ranches and orange groves, which was a distinctly different environment than the big-city surroundings Dr. Neer had grown accustomed to in Ohio. "It was an adjustment," admitted Dr. Neer, who spent a year in Lutz refining his medical skills. "I saw rattlesnake and scorpion bites, things you didn't frequently encounter in inner-city Chicago."

One of his patients, a 40-year-old cowboy, survived the venomous ordeal by getting to Dr. Neer in time for him to extract the toxin before it seeped into his system. Sadly, fate wasn't as kind to an 89-year-old man who waited too long to seek treatment. "By the time his 72-year-old daughter brought him to my office, his body had already been absorbing the venom for over 30 minutes because the tourniquet she applied had not been tied tightly enough," Dr. Neer recalled. "I was able to extract some of the venom and get him to a local hospital, but he died later that night."

After spending a year in the rural outskirts of Tampa, Dr. Neer decided to move further south to the Fort Lauderdale area to be nearer to Gloria's parents and open a practice in the burgeoning region of Broward County. Based on his father-in-law's recommendation, Dr. Neer leased an antique shop on State Road 7 in



Daughters Cindy Burkey and Barbara Heyward

Plantation and converted it into an office, making him the western-most doctor located in Broward County in 1956. It was also during this productive period that the Neer family expanded with the birth of daughters Cindy and Barbara, who are now married with children of their own. Over the next decade, Dr. Neer established a reputation for medical excellence that necessitated the construction of a larger office on a lot adjacent to the existing one—and the recruitment of Ralph Greenwasser, D.O.— to handle the increased patient flow.

It was during this time that Dr. Neer, who still maintains an active real estate broker's license, began indulging his entrepreneurial inclinations by building 10,000 feet of strip stores near his office. That success spurred him to develop another set of strip businesses in nearby Deerfield Beach and open an oceanfront restaurant in the Florida Keys.

That savvy business sense would serve him well several decades later when Dr. Neer became chairman of the AOA's Building Committee in 1992 during the commercial real estate bust. Thanks to his bargaining acumen, Dr. Neer led the negotiations to legally default the current mortgage and repurchase the five-year-old, 17-story building that housed the AOA headquarters for one-third of its original cost utilizing low-interest, tax-exempt bond financing.

Although he had established himself as a real-estate whiz, Dr. Neer was intent on focusing his attention on furthering the cause of osteopathic medicine in Florida, where D.O.s were often viewed as second-class citizens when compared to their allopathic counterparts. "When I came to Florida the recognition of D.O.'s was very poor compared to Dayton, Ohio, which was a surprise to me," he stated. "I knew I wanted to help osteopathic medicine become publicly recognized for its obvious merits, which is why I became politically active in organizations like

FOMA and the Broward County Osteopathic Medical Association (BCOMA)."

One telling incident summed up the bias D.O.s faced as recently as the



Gloria and Howard Neer

1960's, when major insurance companies didn't recognize or cover the services provided by an osteopathic physician. "One day, a very nice, high-class family brought in their son, who had suffered a severe laceration. I sewed him up and he healed perfectly. But back then Blue Cross Blue Shield refused to pay for an osteopathic physician's services. Of course, the family would never come back to me because in their eyes I was suddenly considered a quack."

Angered over the shabby treatment, Dr. Neer became a passionate political activist, eventually serving as president of both the BCOMA and FOMA as he endeavored to improve the overall image of the osteopathic profession. "As FOMA representatives, we were very quick to counter any negative publicity in any printed media," he explained. "We would write rebuttals and encourage everybody to join local service organizations like Kiwanis or Optimist Clubs, to be active in their churches and synagogues with the goal to educate people about who D.O.s are and what they do. We also educated the state's politicians to help get laws changed so organizations like Blue Cross Blue Shield couldn't discriminate

against us any longer."

Dr. Neer's eagerness to address the inequities that existed also compelled him to establish a major osteopathic hospital in Broward County in 1962. "There were a couple of very small, inadequate hospitals that were privately owned, so a small group of fellow D.O.'s eventually convinced enough doctors to put up the money to build a 75-bed facility called Doctors General Hospital in Plantation. Over the next 25 years, the hospital expanded in size four times, eventually becoming a 205-bed facility when we sold it in 1986."

Dr. Neer scored another career coup in 1976 during his two-year stint as FOMA president when all malpractice insurers withdrew from insuring Florida physicians. Utilizing the expertise of Bob Atkins, FOMA formed its own malpractice insurance trust, which eventually became the Gulf Atlantic Insurance Company. Dr. Neer, who was integrally involved in the process, would go on to spend the next 20 years serving as the company's chairman of the board. He presently serves Nova Southeastern University as its representative to the Board of Independent Colleges and Universities Risk Management Association—a self-insurance trust.

When the 1990's dawned, Dr. Neer was still practicing medicine when he was offered an opportunity by Morton Terry, D.O., chancellor of NSU's Health Professions Division, to become associate dean of clinical affairs for the College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1991. "Our paths had crossed many times over the years because we were two active D.O.s in Florida fighting to make a difference," Dr. Neer explained. "When I was president of FOMA in 1976-77, Dr. Terry was really putting on a strong drive to create a college. He had recognized that mom and pop hospitals were going to be a thing of the past, so he sold Osteopathic General Hospital, which created a large

Howard Neer D.O. continued on page 16

pool of money that could be used to establish a college. And he came to FOMA seeking help with making his dream a reality."

The hiring of Dr. Neer proved to be a prudent decision because he was well on his way to achieving the highest level of national prominence within the osteopathic community as president of the AOA. "I knew the local medical community well because I had been in practice for 35 years and was keenly aware of the politics of the area," said Dr. Neer, who also served on the Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine's Board of Trustees in the 1980's.

When Dr. Neer was named president-elect of the AOA in 1994, a position which required him to travel extensively across the country, it became increasingly clear that he would have to relinquish his role as associate dean of clinical affairs. Fortunately, the decision was made to establish an alumni association and appoint Dr. Neer as associate dean of the newly formed unit, which allowed him to travel throughout the country and mingle with NSU-COM alumni at various national meetings and conferences.

In 1995, Dr. Neer began a one-year stint as AOA president, which allowed him to utilize his myriad talents in a variety of beneficial ways. "The AOA is responsible for its own educational system, which comprises about 45 percent of the organization's budget," he explained. "I had to appoint committees that oversaw the staff members that actually carried out the various components of education, public relations, government relations, and professional relations. As AOA president, it was my job to continually educate the profession by going around to all the state association conventions and informing the attendees about what the AOA was doing and providing

regular progress reports to gain their enthusiasm and support."

Once his AOA presidency concluded, Dr. Neer turned his attention to enhancing the college's Alumni Association and assisting the Health Professions Division with negotiations related to student health insurance as well as issues regarding professional liability insurance. "I've never been one to look back; I've always looked ahead to what has to be done," he added. "Sometimes I look back and think of things that could have been done better, but I think that's true of anything you do in life. Before I retire I would like to build the Alumni Association and make it as strong as it can be. Eventually, I would like to see our alumni start giving back to the college. However, I understand why many of them aren't yet. Our alumni are young and are still paying off their student loans, getting married, buying homes, and having kids. All I'm looking for is a small amount each year from each graduate, to plant the idea in their minds to give back to the school."

Because he has worked so diligently to enact positive change for the osteopathic profession in his own right, Dr. Neer is in a unique position to assess the pivotal role the College of Osteopathic Medicine and the Health Professions Division have played in enhancing the stature of osteopathic medicine. "The growth of the Health Professions Division has occurred phenomenally fast. In fact, I have never seen anything else like it," he stressed. "I have been to 18 of the 19 osteopathic schools in the country, and nothing can compare to our growth and quality here. The expertise and vision of Dr. Terry is incredible, and the business sense of Fred Lippman and the rest of the HPD administration and board members have been astonishing. When the two entities merged—Nova University and Southeastern University of the Health Sciences—both were

strong and healthy. The synergy of merging the two created something truly dynamic."

As he edges closer to retirement, Dr. Neer acknowledges he has found more time to smell the proverbial roses and take joy in life's simple pleasures. "At the age of 72, I'm definitely in a slowdown period career wise, but even if I had never accepted Dr. Terry's job offer, I would still be practicing medicine. There is no question about that. However, I also want to enjoy my life," said Dr. Neer, who has done just that by taking leisurely trips with his beloved wife Gloria to exotic locales such as Italy, Scandinavia, Russia, China, Australia, and New Zealand. "My life has been fantastic, and I have been truly blessed to be an osteopathic physician. I've always had a strong work ethic, but now I truly look forward to spending more quality time with my wife and family."



Grandkids Katherine, Robbie, and Zan



Family Portrait (clockwise from left): Zan, Clinch, and Barbara Heyward; Cindy, Greg, and Robbie Burke; Howard and Gloria Neer; and Katherine Heyward.

Dr. Howard Neer Timeline

1929

Born in Dayton, Ohio

1952

Begins matrimonial bliss with Gloria

1954

Receives D.O. degree from Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine

1956

Becomes a first-time father when Cindy is born

1958

Neer family welcomes birth of Barbara

1960

Becomes president of BCOMA

1962

Establishes Doctors General Hospital

1976

Becomes president of FOMA

1980

Serves as cofounder and chairman of the board of Gulf Atlantic Insurance Company

1986

Receives Distinguished Service Award from Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine

1990

Becomes ACOFP Fellow

1991

Receives Outstanding Physician Award from Universal Medical Center

1991

Joins NSU-COM faculty as associate dean of clinical affairs

1993

Becomes NSU-COM associate dean of alumni affairs

1995

Becomes president of AOA

1997

Receives FOMA Physician of the Year Award

2001

Receives Horizon Award from the American Osteopathic Foundation

2001

Receives Donald McBath Lifetime Achievement Award from Florida Society of the ACOFP



Hell on Earth: A Trip to Ground Zero



Story & photos by Elaine Wallace, D.O.



Like most Americans, Dr. Elaine Wallace watched in disbelief as the surreal terrorist attacks unfolded in Technicolor horror on the fateful morning of September 11, 2001. Moved by a profound sense of duty, Dr. Wallace immediately jumped in her car and proceeded northward to battle-scarred New York to assist in the medical relief efforts. Following is the gripping account of her emotional experience.

On the morning of September 11, I had just attended a lecture on osteopathic treatment techniques and was making my way to the Journal Club in the Health Professions Division cafeteria. As I pulled open the cafeteria doors, my heart immediately sank. Huddled around the television were over 100 students. Instantly, I knew something seriously tragic had happened even before I saw the screen. Only once before in my academic career had I seen this type of student gathering—on the day the space shuttle Challenger exploded in 1986.

I soon learned that two planes had crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center. I watched along with my colleagues and students, mesmerized as CNN broadcast the surreal footage over and over, and was stunned with horror as the mighty towers fell. Like many Americans, I called home immediately, needing to assure myself that my loved ones were safe—especially my parents, who live within 15 miles of the tragedy. Within the hour, TV commentators reported that a third plane had crashed into Camp David, which is located approximately 30 miles from my farm in Maryland. It was clear to me that the East Coast was under attack. It was also evident that I needed to be there with my loved ones, in the land of my roots.

Within minutes, I had rescheduled my patients and was in my car driving homeward with \$28 and a credit card in my scrubs pocket. I did not even take the time to go to my Florida home to change. I drove all afternoon and evening and into the next day. Listening to the car radio, I was able to judge the seriousness of the tragedy when not once throughout the entire evening was any news story on any channel repeated. As I drove through Georgia, I learned the report of the Camp David bombing was false and that it was

the Pentagon that had been hit. This report offered no solace, as the Pentagon is 30 miles in the opposite direction from my Maryland home.

Throughout the night, people I encountered at gas stations and restaurants moved about their jobs in a stunned, perfunctory silence with eyes and ears glued to televisions and radios. These were the movements of people in shock; I had seen them before. It was not until the next morning, somewhere along the North Carolina border, that people began to register the significance of the tragedy. I started hearing words of anger and grief, and American flags began to wave across the countryside. Seventeen hours after I began my journey, there was a particularly deep comfort I felt as I rolled into the hills of Appalachia. It was a profound relief to my heart to see for myself that my loved ones were indeed safe.

By Friday, I was driving toward New Jersey to check on my parents. I had driven that familiar stretch of road, from shore to Route 3, many times during my youth. All New Jerseyans know that outside of Newark, across from Manhattan, smoke stacks of manufacturing companies dot the landscape. They are almost an industrially comforting sight, but this time my stomach dropped as I realized that these were not the familiar smoke clouds of industry. This time the billows were New York itself on fire. My family was at church when I arrived, praying just as so many Americans were nationwide.

"Within minutes, I had rescheduled my patients and was in my car driving homeward with \$28 and a credit card in my scrubs pocket."

But by that evening I was able to assure myself that they, too, were safe and that those closest to my heart had been spared.

As the weekend approached, my attention turned to the Big Apple. I had grown up in the shadow of the New York skyline, and like so many, I had a compulsion to help in some way—any way. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani was asking volunteers to stay at home, and all physician hotlines to New York City pleaded the same. Nonetheless, I made my way into the city, overwhelmed by my need to help. For two days, I stood in long lines to fill out forms to volunteer my services. I learned that the lists of health care volunteers were seven pages long, and each day, accompanied by words of gratitude, I was graciously turned away.

Unable to assist, my parents and I made our way to Canal Street in lower Manhattan to see the devastation for ourselves. We walked past rows of ambulances and dump

trucks ready to be called to action. We passed cars covered with ash and buildings with windows and facades blown away. We walked past corners plastered with posters of the faces of the missing and children's notes of thanks to the rescuers. We passed women weeping on street corners, and we cheered along with other concerned spectators as rescuers and firemen returned to safe ground. We stood transfixed as the fires flared up from the buildings at Ground Zero and watched as streams of water poured onto that seven-story wreckage of steel and steam, morbidly glistening like a modern American work of art in the morning sun. We were close enough to feel the heat.

On Monday morning, I returned to New York before sunrise and managed to be placed

in charge of a medical aide unit, jumping the long lists of other physician volunteers, simply because I was there and was persistent. Throughout the morning, I tended to rescuers and firemen who were returning from Ground Zero. My assigned paramedic and I washed the irritated eyes of firemen, tended to crush injuries of workers, set broken fingers, and coated the second-degree burns of firemen who immediately donned their work gloves and returned to Ground Zero. We also provided counsel and comfort along the way as the men and women of FEMA, the FBI, the EPA, the National Guard, and the NYPD—accompanied by their bomb-sniffing dogs—all did their own jobs around us. Just beyond the police barricade, a new line of volunteers stretched down the street and snaked around the block.

By mid afternoon, a disaster coordinator informed the crew I was working with that we would be the next group to go to Ground Zero. We were instructed to watch for the white bus with American flags on it that would transport us to the site. We all began to prepare. The firefighters pulled on their fire suits. I donned my boots and kneepads. I tied tape and scissors to my belt loops and filled my fanny pack with medical supplies. I fitted my hard hat and replaced the organic filters of my respirator with asbestos ones. However, it was at the moment when I watched myself writing my social security number on my forearm with magic marker that the personal enormity of the situation hit me. This was a war zone—and I was in the midst of it.

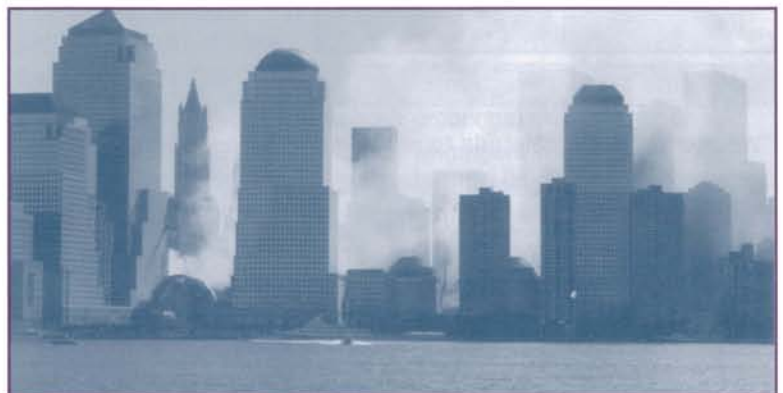
And so into the hot afternoon we waited, this volunteer crew comprising myself, a nurse from Massachusetts, a paramedic from Virginia and one from upstate New York, as well as firefighters from New Jersey, California, Illinois, West Virginia, and Canada. As the New York sun beat down unmercifully, I prepared myself for what I might see at Ground Zero, taking

"This was a war zone—and I was in the midst of it."

on the "doctor demeanor" that all ER physicians know well. I said a prayer of thanks for parents who had raised me to understand service, and the unity of family that had pulled me home without a second's hesitation. I gave thanks for the profession that had taught me the skills to be where I was. I was thankful for the colleagues and students I work with every day who daily prepare themselves for similar lives of service. I thanked God for my gifts, for protecting those I loved, and for the great nation I was privileged to live in.

We never did get to Ground Zero that day. Later that afternoon, a policeman returning from the scene came to tell us that no additional volunteers were likely to be called into

service, due to the increasing numbers of rats at Ground Zero that had begun to eat at the wreckage and bite the volunteers. By sunset, we had disrobed and disbanded. We said our good-byes with heartfelt embraces, understanding we would not likely ever see one another again—and in some way hoping that was indeed true.



The smoldering ruins of the World Trade Center cloud the New York skyline.

We knew we had not had the opportunity to lift the buckets of debris and the girders of steel or the burning fragments of concrete. But we went away knowing we had perhaps done the greatest and most difficult work of all. We had lifted the hearts and spirits of New Yorkers—and of many Americans. We had played a pivotal role in the defiance of evil and terrorism on U.S. soil, and we had lent a hand to the renewal of the human spirit of goodness. We were, that day, the voices of the character of America.

Elaine Wallace, D.O., serves as professor and chair of the Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice. She joined the NSU-COM faculty in July 2000.





Terrorist Attacks Spark Patriotic Acts



As news first spread throughout the Health Professions Division of the malevolent terrorist attacks taking place along the U.S. East Coast on September 11, standard classroom activities ceased as students streamed into the cafeteria, staring in stunned silence as TV screens beamed appalling images of unrelenting carnage and destruction.



M-2 Student Michael Ferraro

"We met up in the cafeteria to watch it unfold on TV, and we all were standing there in shock with our mouths on the floor, especially after we saw the plane hit the second World Trade Center tower," recalled M-2 student Michael Ferraro. "We eventually went back to class and tried to focus on the lecture, but it was impossible even though Dr. Edward Packer and Dr. Edgar Bolton did an excellent job of trying to maintain some kind of continuity. The fact that they could get up there and keep lecturing was definitely a tribute to their character."

As the shock of the tragic events began to wear off, a feeling of utter helplessness enveloped Ferraro, who felt a special affinity for the New York firefighters who courageously sacrificed their lives in an attempt to save those trapped in the smoldering towers of the World Trade Center. "I work with the Plantation Fire Department, and when I went to University of Connecticut I was a volunteer fireman in Eagleville, a nearby area around the university," he

explained. "The firefighters who lost their lives didn't do anything wrong, and that is the hardest part to justify in your mind. They were there to save lives."

Instead of wallowing in despair over the devastating events, Ferraro channeled his energy in a positive way by coordinating a ribbon-making effort that would pay homage to the victims and their grief-stricken families. "I felt like I wasn't doing anything productive after seeing everything that had happened, so I bought some red, white, and blue ribbons and got together in a study room with a group of my classmates to cut the colored ribbons and put them together with safety pins."

Initially, Ferraro and his cohorts made 180 ribbons, which was the exact numbers of students comprising the M-2 class. But the response he received the next day from all Health Professions Division students was so overwhelming that Ferraro and a second group of classmates bought and produced 600 additional patriotic ribbons.

"I was amazed by the student body," Ferraro admitted. "We didn't ask for any donations, but the students' generosity was overwhelming. All of HPD came together. We don't have a lot of interaction with each other most of the time, and to see how everyone was so giving and thoughtful made it all the more impressive. Being in Florida and being health professionals, I think we all felt we wanted to be up there doing something, and this was a way for everyone to contribute in some way."

In addition to raising over \$600, which was donated to the American Red Cross, Ferraro was touched by the outpouring of concern that was

showcased by all sectors of the Health Professions Division. "The most rewarding aspect was that we could all come together and that the caring nature of the health professions shone through. It was such a great feeling to see everyone from the construction workers to the staff and faculty on campus supporting our efforts."

M-2 Students who participated in the ribbon-making:

Michael Ferraro

Shane Gober

Katarina Lindley

Robert Holmes

Michael Hohlastos

Kim Edmonson

Anahita Azharian

Brent Hutson

Rupert Galvez

David Bingham

Meghann Pine

Mollie Jan

Matthew Swartz

Cynthia Wong - HPD receptionist



Altruistic students put their patriotism on display.

Kumar's Compassion Benefits Beleaguered New Yorkers

As an American Red Cross volunteer, M-4 student Ashley Kumar had gone through her fair share of disaster preparedness training when she first joined forces with a South Florida organizational chapter. So when disciples of Osama bin Laden destroyed the iconic twin towers of the World Trade Center, Kumar immediately sprang into action.

"I called the American Red Cross Greater Miami Chapter as soon as I heard the news," stated Kumar, who was performing her pediatric and gastroenterology rotation at Miami Children's Hospital when she first learned of the terrorist attacks. "I was pre-rounding at the time, and when I went to the computer lab someone casually mentioned that two planes had crashed at the World Trade Center. From the way it was initially explained to me, it sounded like an air-traffic control mishap had occurred. But when I went into a patient's room to start my rounds, there was dead silence everywhere—except for the television news reports of the attacks."

Kumar diligently continued her rounds. But as soon as she had the opportunity to call her local Red Cross chapter, she immediately volunteered to assist in any way possible. "When I moved here from Texas, I started taking Red Cross disaster services classes so I could go out and help in the event of a hurricane or some other catastrophe," she explained. "Because I had received training in disaster services, mass care, shelter operations, and damage assessment, I called to see what I could do and received permission to get the next day off from my rotations to help with the influx of calls at the phone banks."

Working with Infusion—the young working professionals' branch of the



M-4 Student Ashley Kumar

American Red Cross—Kumar was soon doing much more than answering phones. To help raise funds for the relief efforts, Kumar and 15 other Infusion members trekked to South Beach in Miami with Red Cross buckets in hand and canvassed trendy clubs and nightspots for donations. "People were extremely generous, and all the club owners were great about allowing us to ask their patrons for contributions," she said. "We raked in about \$11,000 that first weekend, while the Greater Miami Red Cross Chapter raised \$78,000 overall during the first weekend after the attacks."

Although raising money and answering phones were certainly noble enough ways to participate in the relief efforts, Kumar had an ardent desire to do more and directly assist the residents of New York who had been impacted by the tragedy. After receiving permission from NSU-COM to take a temporary hiatus from her rotations, Kumar flew to New York three weeks after the attacks to assist the American Red Cross with its ongoing relief efforts.

"Everything fell into place," explained Kumar, who paid her own airfare and coordinated her own living arrangements near Times Square during her two-week stay in the Big Apple. "Initially, I was only going to go for five days because I wasn't sure how

needed I would be. But when I got there I saw there was still plenty to do for the disaster victims."

Kumar's compassionate mission began when she signed up to do logistics at a makeshift respite center located at St. John's University, on the northwest perimeter of Ground Zero. "I wasn't really sure what logistics was at the time, but it turned out to be a 24-hour center that was open for people to obtain supplies like gloves and hard hats, get a hot meal, take a shower, and grab some sleep," she stated. "One area was for dealing with the relief workers and one was for assisting the people directly affected by the disaster."

Not surprisingly, the experience proved to be both emotional and inspirational for Kumar, who spent much of her time interacting with local policemen and firefighters, as well as representatives from organizations like the Secret Service, the FBI, and the New York Medical Examiner's Office. "With the relief workers, you were really trying to take their minds off what they were doing," she said. "They had spent so many hours at Ground Zero and were spending their time sifting through body parts, some of which may very well have been those of their friends and fellow policemen or firefighters. It was very traumatic, so we had spiritual advisors and general counselors for them to talk to."

In addition to working in logistics, Kumar was recruited to visit other makeshift sites (including a boat called The Spirit of New York) and work in the Red Cross' family services unit, where she basically served as a social worker after participating in a three-hour crash course in operational training. "As a caseworker, I got to work one-on-one with the residents and assess their

Kumar continued on page 22

needs," she stated. "The Red Cross does try to provide a little bit of financial assistance until the federal government and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds kick in. Many of the people I saw had been forced from their homes because the windows had been blown out from the collapse of the towers. Since the ash and debris ruined all their possessions, I would sit with them and ask what they needed. I did everything from handing out vouchers to grocery stores to signing them up to receive \$250 family maintenance allowances."

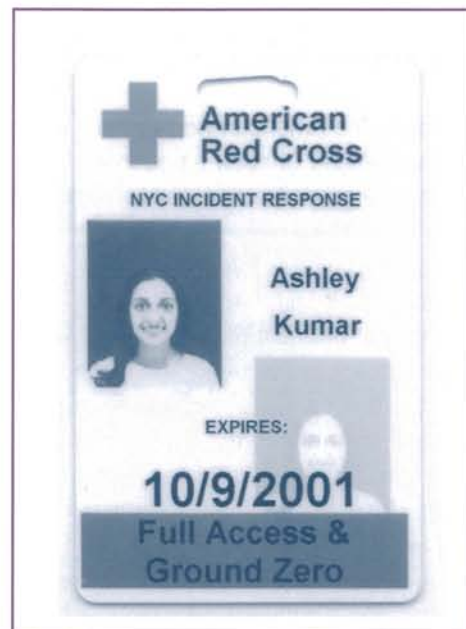
Because health professionals are taught to maintain a certain amount of professional detachment when dealing with patients, Kumar handled her tasks admirably. However, when human suffering constantly surrounds you, staying stoic becomes an implausible possibility for even the most-hardened individual. "Actually, one of the scenes that hit me the hardest was when I went to volunteer on The Spirit of New York, which was located near the southwest perimeter of Ground Zero,"

she said. "The NYPD, the fire department, and the Port Authority police had set up their own little memorial near that area, and it was so sad.

"They had king-size pictures of everyone who had been killed from their various departments, including a list of all the victims," she added. "It looked like a war casualty list. Then, a little further beyond that memorial was another one where loved ones were able to leave tokens, notes, and flowers. One was from a woman to her husband that simply said, 'I'm going to be strong for you and our kids...I love you.' That's when it really gets to you, that you truly grasp the enormity of the tragedy."

Kumar, who plans on pursuing a career in pediatric emergency medicine when she graduates in May 2002, says her penchant for outreaching to others was instilled by her parents, who are big believers in aiding humanity. "My parents have always been very active in the Indian community by trying to help

people back in India or by assisting Indian organizations here in the United States," she explained. "I was very fortunate to be in a position where I could go to New York and help out. It was an extremely inspiring experience, and I was honored and privileged to do my part for those in need."



Poisonous Pedigree Proves Opportune for "Tox Doc" Robin McFee, D.O., M.P.H.



Robin McFee, D.O., M.P.H.

When Robin McFee, D.O., M.P.H., joined NSU-COM's Department of Preventive Medicine last summer as an assistant professor, one of her goals was to help the college develop a center of excellence in adolescent health and research. But sometimes life throws a monkey wrench into even the best-laid plans, which is exactly what happened on an unforgettable September morning when America was rocked by a series of brutal terrorist attacks.

Suddenly, Dr. McFee, who has extensive training in medical toxicology, saw her curricula paradigm shift from adolescent health to the more sobering subjects of bioterrorism and

weapons of mass destruction. "Would we be sitting here talking about anthrax and weapons of mass destruction had it not been for the events that have transpired over the past few months? Probably not," said Dr. McFee, who is among the rare minority of individuals who has actually treated patients diagnosed with cutaneous anthrax. "I'd probably be sitting here talking to you about building a center of excellence in adolescent health with Dr. Alan Morrison (assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine). In a perfect world, I would have taken my training in medical toxicology, folded it into public health, taught a lecture or two on toxicology, and gone merrily and quietly into the night. Now I'm the 'Tox Doc.'"

Because NSU-COM is committed to staying abreast of emerging medical trends, the college has joined forces with local experts to form an ongoing Taskforce on Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction. The taskforce, which will

focus on education, training, and research, comprises a mix of faculty members (including Dr. McFee) as well as Southeast Florida health leaders who are well versed in preventive medicine and public health issues.

"Our overarching goal is to become a dynamic resource to the NSU community and the community at large by developing an institute of excellence in weapons of mass destruction that utilizes the talent and experience of our faculty and the executive medical directors of Broward, Palm Beach, and Miami-Dade County," she explained. "We want all health professions students to graduate with some knowledge of weapons of mass destruction and be better prepared to know what to do in terms of public health and surveillance—in other words, how to keep people safe. Also, within that integrated approach, we are outreaching to community and regional hospitals like the North Broward Hospital District and working closely with emergency room directors, fire rescue personnel, and other responders so that it's not five different organizations doing the same things—some well, some badly."

It may sound like an ambitious goal to foster symbiotic collaboration with all sectors of the health community, but Dr. McFee feels that education and teamwork are the best ways to combat what promises to be a trickle-down effect in terms of trauma-related physical, psychological, and social problems. "Many people don't realize that substance abuse rises after a mass casualty incident," she noted. "And so our social workers, our mental health professionals, our psychologists and psychiatrists, our allied health colleagues—they all need to be on board with us on this. Besides post-traumatic stress disorder, there are the non-axis definable effects."

Dr. McFee pointed to the 1995 subway incident in Tokyo, Japan, when a deadly

nerve gas called sarin was released in commuter trains on several different subway lines by a terrorist cult group, killing a dozen people and injuring over 5,500. "After the attacks, there was a fairly high percentage of people who would not ride a subway anymore," she explained. "In this country, it would be an interesting study to see who will no longer live in a high-rise building and who has fear of or will avoid going into a high-rise tower. That's why the College of Osteopathic Medicine is attempting to put all the players together and have a long-term plan in place. As an institute, we're not going to fold up our umbrellas once the terrorists are caught and arrested. And all this ties in well with the Master of Public Health Program that is now under the college's auspices. Public health and the public health infrastructure have been ignored for far too long, and now we think we can fix it."

In early December, the college addressed some of these concerns by partnering with local medical associations to coordinate several bioterrorism and weapons of mass destruction seminars for the physician community, law enforcement personnel, and area health care professionals (i.e. paramedics, emergency medical technicians, and firefighters). "The seminars were basically a soup-to-nuts discourse on all the major aspects of weapons of mass destruction, including the shift in paradigms we went through as physicians, nurses, and public health providers before and after September 11," Dr. McFee said. "These seminars were designed to give a basic fund of knowledge to physicians and health care providers on the subject so they know what's out there. Our goal was to create a 'you're not alone' mentality and make it clear that we're all in this together."

Dr. McFee, who is currently developing an interactive CD-ROM for physicians, health care providers, and nurse practitioners on the topics of

bioterrorism and weapons of mass destruction, also is committed to imparting similar knowledge to all students enrolled in an NSU-HPD college. "I already provided an introductory two-hour lecture to College of Osteopathic Medicine students on weapons of mass destruction, and the feedback was incredible," she stated. "I want all our students, as well as the physician community in general, to know the possible public health implications, to be aware of the risks present right here in Broward County that could cause a mass casualty event."

"For instance, let's say I stood on top of an overpass on I-95 and blew half a pound of inhalation anthrax into the air and let the wind take it," she added. "There wouldn't be enough beds available in the intensive care units countywide to deal with the influx of bodies. I want the physician population to know how to identify the symptoms, how to treat them, how to protect themselves, and how to discern the sequela. Of course, we don't want doctors to think that every time somebody comes in with flu-like symptoms that it could be a potential case of inhalational anthrax. On the other hand, we want to give physicians permission to suspect. We don't want them to feel like the proverbial shy kid in the back of the room who's afraid to raise his hand for fear of being wrong."



Dr. McFee recently received a certificate of appreciation for her educational efforts from Robert Self, M.D., medical executive director of the Broward County Health Department.

Rural Medicine Program Develops Concerned, Committed Physicians

Since its establishment in 1979, the College of Osteopathic Medicine has been committed to educating students in rural medicine and preparing them to work in underserved communities. Even as instructional methodologies have changed over the past two decades, a look at the college's mission statement reveals that it remains "dedicated to training students in all aspects of medicine, especially primary care...with a commitment to family medicine and a focus on rural and underserved populations."

Over the past 22 years, the Department of Rural Medicine has added many components to a program that is continually fine-tuned and adapted to stay abreast of medical advances that help meet the growing needs of an ever-changing underserved population. At the heart of the program is an eight-hour introductory course taught each spring to second-year students. During their fourth year, the students participate in a mandatory three-month clinical rural medicine rotation located at one of a variety of rural and underserved sites throughout Florida and the Southeast.

"The Rural Medicine Program has truly evolved," said James Howell, M.D., M.P.H., who serves as professor and chair of the Department of Rural Medicine. "There are over 100 doctors of osteopathic medicine now practicing in rural and underserved areas in Florida, and many of them have graduated from NSU-COM. With their emphasis on holistic care that incorporates osteopathic principles, they serve as excellent role models for the senior students."

Students currently rotate at an array of sites, which are comprised primarily of community health centers located throughout Central and South Florida. These include:

- Central Florida Health Care in Avon Park
- Central Florida Family Health Center in Sanford
- Marion E. Feather Community Health Center in Immokalee
- Department of Veterans Affairs in Fort Myers
- Family Health Centers of Southwest Florida, Inc. in Fort Myers
- Fellsmere Medical Center in Fellsmere
- Florida Community Health Centers in Clewiston, Fort Pierce, Indiantown, and Okeechobee
- Manatee County Rural Health Centers in Parrish
- Palm Beach County Health Department in Belle Glade
- Sun Coast Community Health Center in Ruskin
- Thomas E. Langley Medical Center in Sumterville

"Our purpose is to get as much primary care education to the students as possible and to facilitate their being introduced to diverse populations," explained Dr. Howell, who credits

Martin Goldstein, D.O.—the original program chair—for laying the essential groundwork that has made the program a national model. "We want the students to gain a rural education experience that includes involvement in issues of public health and diverse cultures. At the same time, they acquire medical skills and experience patient contact while working side by side with a physician and the primary care team."

The department also has the challenging task of serving as a quasi real estate office for students who need to relocate to perform their rural rotations. "Actually, we are in the rental business," said Robert Perraud, D.O., who serves as associate professor and director of the Department of Rural Medicine. "We probably lease a quarter million dollars worth of apartments across the state for the students' use. We do try to accommodate the students and keep them close to home, especially those who are married or have families. Many students choose to commute daily if the distance isn't too great, but they all have apartments they can utilize."

The uniqueness of the rural rotations, where physicians graciously volunteer to mentor the students, also dictates that Drs. Howell and Perraud be in frequent contact with the program's participants. "We visit every site, every quarter," Dr. Perraud said. "We try to spend real quality time with the students. And I think that is very beneficial since the students spend most of their junior and senior years at many variable sites. Two things are accomplished when we visit the rural sites. One is discussion and a review of the program with the students. The second is networking with physicians and other health professionals who teach our students. We can't thank these physicians enough for their support and dedication."

As a form of appreciation, the rural medicine department coordinates a retreat each June for the physicians and other participants who contribute to the success of the rural rotations. The weekend retreat allows physicians to network with their peers in a relaxed setting and share ideas and information with Dean Silvagni. They also earn continuing medical education credits while participating in seminars presented by knowledgeable NSU-COM faculty.

As is the case with most aspects of life, NSU-COM's Rural Medicine Program has evolved with the times, as has the definition of what "rural" really means. "Rural settings are substantially different today than they were 30 or 40 years ago," Dr. Howell explained. "There used to be a major disconnect with urban areas, which made physicians feel

isolated and outmoded. Today, with the Internet and the growth of tele-medicine, information is readily available. It's not like the old days when periodicals and frequently outdated books were used. Today, the Internet, even at a very rural site, is an essential source of medical information.

"Rural is usually defined by a population density," Dr. Howell added. "But there's a saying in rural health that once you've seen one rural site...you've seen one rural site. In other words, they vary greatly. If you go to rural Alaska, it's going to be a vastly different experience than being in a rural site in Florida. Most places in Florida, regardless of how rural they are, have a major medical facility located no more than an hour or so from the site. However, what we do have is tremendous cultural diversity in our rural areas. Many of the people we serve have belief systems and values that are very different from those of mainstream health care providers. That's why it's crucial for the students to develop a high level of cultural competency, so they can truly understand their patients' world and serve them effectively."

The College of Osteopathic Medicine's Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program also plays a pivotal role in the success of the Rural Medicine Program. Since its inception in 1985, AHEC has supported the program by providing the initial start-up money for the three-month rural rotations and establishing the innovative Library Without Walls Program. Thanks to this program, students and practicing physicians at community health centers are able to electronically access the resources housed in the medical library at NSU's Health Professions Division.

The AHEC Program enhances the quality of primary care and public health services in rural areas by providing the computers and technical assistance, thereby making available a broad array of library/information and clearinghouse services. AHEC also actively provides continuing education to physicians and other health providers in rural communities throughout South and Central Florida, including collaboration with the Rural Medicine Program on its annual rural preceptors' retreat.

The augmentation of the Rural Medicine Program, especially through its affiliation with the Florida Department of Corrections, has afforded students even greater educational and clinical opportunities. This one-month elective rotation in specialized correctional medical care highlights the unique aspects of institutional medicine and the substance abuse problems associated with the inmate population.

During this rotation, students learn to recognize the common acute and chronic emotional ailments and physical diseases found in the inmate population. When the rotation concludes, students are required to present a complete

evaluation of a complex patient via a PowerPoint presentation, followed by a thorough question-and-answer sequence with medical staff.

"Dr. David Thomas, chair of our Division of Correctional Medicine, has been a very effective administrative and medical leader, and correctional medicine care has turned into a terrific elective rotation since we added it last year," Dr. Howell stated. "This is a greatly underserved population nationally, and our students are eager to participate in the rotation. We ended up with five students in a place where we could only house three. We now have students who, after they complete their residencies, desire to fulfill the requirements of their student loans at the Florida Department of Corrections' medical institutions. Hopefully, we will be able to staff the correctional medical profession with very some fine osteopathic physicians in the next few years."

In addition to the aforementioned sites, the rural scope continues to widen, encompassing private physicians' offices, the Miccosukee Indian Reservation in Miami-Dade County, and the Osteopathic Institute of the South. "We've been adding more options, including the private practice alternative where students rotate through a doctor's office, and we will be incorporating sites in Mississippi and North Carolina," Dr. Howell added. "As Dr. Silvagni states, this is Nova Southeastern University, and the College of Osteopathic Medicine is at the forefront of improving osteopathic training throughout the region.

"When Dr. Terry founded the college with his original group of visionaries, he really wanted to focus on primary care and underserved populations," Dr. Howell stressed. "That's why we continually analyze how we can help provide the best medical care for rural and underserved populations and obtain the best training for our students. It's an ever-changing gestalt.



The Department of Rural Medicine comprises Dr. James Howell, professor and chair, Marysel Morales, coordinator, and Dr. Robert Perraud, associate professor and director.

Student Organization of the Month

"Christian Medical Association (CMA)"



Dr. Charlotte Paolini and CMA President Jeffery Crick

When Charlotte Paolini, D.O., heard the chilling news about the misanthropic terrorist attacks taking place on that macabre September morning, her initial instinct was to rush back to campus and gather students from the Christian Medical Association (CMA) to pray for the safety of a nation under siege.

"When I heard the news, my first instinct was to be there for the students," said Dr. Paolini, who chairs the Division of Geriatrics and serves as faculty advisor to the college's CMA student chapter. "Since I was off campus at the time, my only thought was that I need to get to the CMA students because we need to pray for our country, which was in crisis. So we gathered in the back of the auditorium, held hands, and started to pray for the victims, their families, the welfare of President Bush, and all the citizens of the United States."

That commitment to faith and the power of prayer is what fuels the CMA, which is a component of the Christian Medical and Dental Associations (CMDA). Founded in 1931, the CMDA serves as a voice and ministry for Christian doctors and provides programs and services supporting its mission to "change hearts in healthcare."

Maintaining a spiritual connection in a frenzied medical school environment can be a stressful challenge, especially when most students devote an average of 16 hours each day to their studies. That's why M-2 student Jeffery Crick, current president of the college's CMA chapter, encourages his fellow students to maintain a relationship with God despite their hectic schedules.

"CMA's main goal is to get first and second-year students to keep their focus on Christ as they go through medical school," Crick explained. "In medical school, we're just

bombarded with so much to do, and it's very easy to get consumed and to forget about the important thing: Why God called you to medicine in the first place. Having an on-campus Christian organization to provide an outlet for bible study or fellowship is key."

The organization, which has grown to approximately 80 members over the past year, plans a number of weekly events that center on spiritual themes such as bible study, prayer, witnessing, worship, and fellowship. "Our goal is to educate and equip the first and second-year students so when they get out into their rotations and residencies and into their own practices, they are comfortable with expressing their faith through their profession," said Crick, who credits NSU-COM faculty members for epitomizing that philosophy. "Our first lecture was from Dr. Ken Johnson (assistant professor in the Department of OB/GYN), and he wasn't afraid to get up and talk about praying with his patients," Crick added. "That's why the osteopathic philosophy appealed to me, because it embraces the holistic mind, body, and spirit principles. The entire faculty has been great in allowing us to explore those spiritual areas, especially in our OPP department, which is very much into the hands-on, spiritual aspect of healing."

Crick also credits the active and affectionate participation of Dr. Paolini to explain the club's growing popularity. "Dr. Paolini's involvement into what we do is very vital because she serves as a true physician role model," he said. "I don't think any other student club has a faculty advisor who participates as much with the officers as Dr. Paolini does. We meet frequently and discuss ways to reach out to the medical students not just within CMA but to the student body in general. She's always there for me to call."

Although Dr. Paolini downplays her contributions to the CMA, her involvement has provided opportunities for club members to offer community outreach via events like the Feast of Plenty, an annual event sponsored by First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale that provides free medical screenings to homeless and medically underserved individuals. Not surprisingly, when CMA members wanted to coordinate compassionate visits to lonely patients in area hospitals and nursing homes, they once again turned to Dr. Paolini for guidance.

"Jeff and I meet fairly regularly to discuss ways to be of practical help to the community as well as the other students," Dr. Paolini explained. "For example, we offer free anatomy tutoring to all HPD students before each exam, and

the CMA members volunteer to be the tutors. But I feel my major role is to provide encouragement. Jeff talked about focus, and that's so true for medical students because their schedules are so rigorous. So when I see them drooping, and they're dragging after a big test, that's an opportunity for me to remind them that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and that there is a reason that they're doing this. I remind them not to focus on grades, but to keep the bigger picture in mind, which is maintaining an active relationship with a living, loving God to stay refreshed and renewed. As a physician who has gone through the rigors of medical school, I can identify with them and say, 'I know it's hard because I've been there.'"

In addition to implementing new community service projects, such as an adopt-a-grandparent program, CMA members have showcased their international concern by participating in medical missions to Guatemala, India, and Nicaragua. "We encourage all our members to embrace everybody with love," said Crick, who is considering a career path focusing on family medicine. "I want to prepare myself through my training to do as much as I can for patients in a missionary

setting in an underserved area," he explained. "I don't know what God is calling me to do yet, and I don't want to get ahead of God and plan those things out, but I know he has called me here to NSU-COM for a reason."

Though science and faith are often portrayed as mutually exclusive realms, Crick believes the study of medicine has actually brought him closer to God. "When we started to study the cell, and when you see how just a single cell works and the complexity of it, to me, that can only be explained by a creator. It has only increased my faith tenfold when I see the beautiful work that God has done through his creation."

2001-02 CMA Officers

Charlotte Paolini, D.O., Faculty Advisor

Jeffery Crick, President

Stephanie Jenkins, Vice President

Evelyn Ramos, Treasurer

Elizabeth Meade, Secretary

Tending body, soul

BY JOHN RABE
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

While spending more than 16 hours a day studying the body, it can be easy for overworked medical students to lose sight of the soul. However, the Christian Medical and Dental Association is a national organization that wants to see that this doesn't happen.

Jeff Crick, president of the local chapter at Nova Southeastern University Medical School, said the CMA, as the association is known on campus, encourages students to maintain a relationship with God despite their hectic lifestyles.

"CMA's main goal is to get first- and second-year students to keep their focus on Christ as they go through medical school," said Crick, a second-year medical student at Nova. "As you can imagine with medical school, it's very easy to get consumed and to forget about the important thing: Why God called you to medicine in the first place," he said.

According to Crick,

Campus group helps South Florida medical students maintain a relationship with God and keep their focus on Christ, despite their busy schedules.

medical students. "It's a great network of friends—it's basically an extended family," he said.

Crick said Nova's approach to medicine fits in well with his Christian world view. Nova Southeastern is one of 19 osteopathic medical schools in the country. Osteopathic medicine is a more holistic approach to medical care than traditional allopathic medicine, which Crick says is compatible with the approach Christ took.

"Ultimately, a Christian D.O. [doctor of osteopathic medicine] is the closest example of perfect holistic medicine," Crick said. He said osteopathic treatment addresses the mind, body and spirit much as Jesus did.

The CMA has found a receptive audience among new students, with at least 30 joining the organization during the first few weeks of school. The newcomers are already finding that they will have to be diligent to maintain their spiritual lives in the high-pressure atmosphere of medical school.

"Medicine wants all of your time, and so you have to make sure you know what your priorities are—really on a weekly basis—or else it'll become your first priority by



2001-02 CMA officers Stephanie Jenkins, Jeffery Crick, Elizabeth Meade, and Evelyn Ramos.



CMA members provided free medical screenings during the Feast of Plenty, held in November at First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale

Alumni Association Executive Committee2001-2002 Officers

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 Daniel McBath, D.O. – Class of 1990

Committee Chairmen

Jeffrey Grove, D.O. – Program Chair
 Daniel McBath, D.O. – Fundraising Chair
 Tamer Gozleveli, D.O. – Webmaster
 Michael Gervasi, D.O. – Editor

Upcoming Events

(For additional NSU-COM related information regarding the following events, please call (954) 262-1029 or e-mail immacula@nova.edu.)

NSU-COM Alumni Reunion and Fifth Annual CME Program

February 1-3, 2002

Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six in Fort Lauderdale, Florida

The annual alumni weekend will get underway with a reception on Friday evening, February 2 at 7:30 p.m. CME sessions will be presented on Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday evening, social events will begin with a 6:30 p.m. reception followed by a gala banquet at 7:30 p.m. which will include the presentation of the Living Tribute Award to Mary Smith Allegro.

NSU-COM Alumni Seminar at Sea

February 3-10, 2002

Caribbean cruise on the Costa Atlantica

During the one-week excursion, 11.5 hours of AOA Category 1-A and AMA-PRA Category 1 credits will be offered.

Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (FOMA) Annual Convention

February 21-24, 2002

Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six in Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Included in the symposium program will be the five mandatory hours of Category 1-A CME credits targeting the following topics:

- Risk Management
- HIV/AIDS

- Domestic Violence
- Florida Laws and Rules
- Managed Care and End-of-Life Care

The convention will offer approximately 30 hours of 1-A CME credits. An NSU-COM alumni reception will be held at this event. Please refer to the program for specific time and place.

ACOFP Annual Convention

March 6-10, 2002

Wyndham Palace Resort & Spa at Lake Buena Vista in Orlando, Florida

An NSU-COM alumni reception will be held at this event, so please refer to the program for specific time and place. For hotel and convention information, please contact the ACOFP.

Alumni Web Page: <http://medicine.nova.edu>

Join our Listserv! (listserv@list.nova.edu or nsucom_alumni@list.nova.edu).

We are encouraging all alumni to post their addresses on Listserv to build an Internet directory.

You may also access Listserv at the Alumni Web Page by clicking on the "Join Our Listserv" link.

Alumni Spotlight

Susan Yahia, D.O. – Class of 1991 Member, Dean's Alumni Advisory Council



Susan Yahia, D.O.

When it comes to education, it's abundantly clear that Susan Yahia, D.O., class of 1991, has an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. Dr. Yahia, who is the newest addition to the Dean's Alumni Advisory Council, spent her undergraduate career

matriculating at a number of institutions, including the University of Miami, the Universidad Central Del Este in the Dominican Republic, and St. Thomas University in Miami, where she graduated magna cum laude.

In 1991, Dr. Yahia, who was born in Brooklyn, New York, and moved to North Miami Beach at age seven, fulfilled a longstanding dream when she received her D.O. degree from NSU-COM. However, in addition to obtaining a first-rate education at the college, Dr. Yahia discovered something some people spend a lifetime searching for—true love. As is the case with many medical students, who form a romantic bond with their peers, Dr. Yahia found her soul mate in 1989 alumnus Ronald Tolchin, D.O. Marriage soon followed, as did the birth of their two children, Austin (age five) and Stefani (age three).

After graduating from NSU-COM, Dr. Yahia interned and completed her internal medicine residency at Union Hospital in New Jersey before returning to South Florida to practice internal medicine at Primecare Medical Associates in Coral Gables. Despite the demands that come from being a mother, wife, and busy medical practitioner, she also finds time to serve as a clinical preceptor for the University of Miami School of Medicine and School of Nursing, as well as the Barry University School of Nursing.

Her commitment to community service has led her to participate in a range of activities, including the Children's

Health and Safety Fair of Miami, the Children's Health Festival, the AIDS Education Series at Dade County Public Schools, and the Annual Health Fair of North Miami Beach. She also serves as an active member of the American Osteopathic Association, the American College of Osteopathic Internists, and the American Medical Women's Association.

Dr. Yahia, who is a diplomate of the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners and is certified by the American Osteopathic Board of Internal Medicine, also has the distinction of being handpicked by Governor Jeb Bush to serve on the Florida Board of Osteopathic Medicine. Interestingly, her selection resulted from an anonymous recommendation to Governor Bush.

"I am quite impressed that Governor Bush appointed Dr. Yahia to the Florida osteopathic board," said Howard Neer, D.O., professor and associate dean of alumni affairs. "Obviously, the governor and Dr. Yahia's nominator were very impressed with her abilities and judgment. In fact, she is the second NSU-COM graduate to be a member of the board of examiners. I know that she and Dr. Glenn Moran, class of 1988, will certainly work well together to ensure fairness to both the public and the physicians."

Although Dr. Yahia has no knowledge of who made that fortuitous recommendation, she is clearly grateful to her unknown benefactor for his or her kind deed, which has allowed her to serve her profession with pride and distinction.



Family fun with Austin, Susan, Stefani, and Ron.

Alumni Association Fund Honor Roll

In the spring of 1999, NSU-COM launched an alumni-based fundraising effort to generate dollars that would be used to create an endowment fund to reduce future tuition costs for NSU-COM students and produce a funding pool that would be utilized for discretionary purposes as determined by the Alumni Association Executive Committee. If you would like to learn more about the Alumni Association Fund, please contact the Office of Alumni Affairs at (954) 262-1029.

Following are the altruistic individuals who have contributed to NSU-COM's Alumni Association Fund since its inception:

Heritage Circle – represents donors who will make a significant deferred gift to the college via life-insurance policies, inheritances, or trusts. Additionally, friends of the osteopathic profession may choose to honor a D.O. by contributing to the fund. When this occurs, the contributors and the honoree will be appropriately acknowledged in the honor roll.

Chancellor's Council (\$5,000 or more)

Dean's Council (\$1,000-\$4,999)

\$2,000 Contributors

Dr. John Geake, Jr. (class of 1993)
Dr. Jeffrey Grove (class of 1990)

\$1,000 Contributors

Dr. Tamer Gozleveli (class of 1987)
Dr. Gregory James (class of 1988)
Dr. Joel Rush (class of 1985)

500 Club (\$500-\$999)

Dr. Kenneth Johnson (class of 1991)
Dr. Isidro Pujol (class of 1994)
Dr. Stanley S. Zimmelman (class of 1991)

250 Club (\$250-\$499)

Dr. Joseph Corcoran (class of 1996)
Dr. Tyler Cymet (class of 1988)
Dr. Armando L. Hassun, Jr. (class of 1992)
Dr. Robert Klein (class of 1991)
Dr. John H. Potomski, Jr.
Dr. Gregory Serfer (class of 1997)

Century Club (\$100-\$249)

Dr. Michael Baron (class of 1988)
Dr. Kenneth E. Bresky (class of 1992)
Dr. Charles Chodorow (class of 1989)
Dr. Richard Cottrell (class of 1990)
Dr. Alan David (class of 1992)
Dr. Bruce David (class of 1988)
Dr. John Gordon (class of 1992)
Dr. Thomas Green (class of 1998)
Dr. Jennifer Hayes (class of 1986)
Dr. Richard Herman (class of 1989)
Dr. Elizabeth Hancock (class of 1986)
Dr. Sharon Johnston (class of 1993)
Dr. Frances M. Mally (class of 1993)
Dr. Merideth Norris (class of 2000)
Dr. Mitchell Pace (class of 1987)
Dr. Ravi Randhawa (class of 1992)
Dr. Ronald J. Renuart (class of 1990)
Dr. Robert Sammartino (class of 1990)
Dr. Sandi Scott-Holman (class of 1993)
Dr. Theodore A. Spevack (class of 1985)
Dr. Donald Teplitz (class of 1985)
Dr. Susan Yahia (class of 1991)

Friends (\$99 or less)

Dr. John G. Allred (class of 1997)
Dr. Deirdra Bergman (class of 1985)
Dr. Andrew Biondo (class of 2000)
Dr. Alice F. Blavo (class of 1994)
Dr. David Brown (class of 1987)
Dr. Nai-li Chen (class of 1985)
Dr. Christopher Davis (class of 1989)
Dr. M. Jane Foye (class of 1998)
Dr. Maria Ruiz Harris (class of 1996)
Dr. Joseph Hodge (class of 1987)
Dr. James D. Landreau (class of 1998)
Dr. Sheryl Pearlman Movsas (class of 1992)
Dr. Steven and Carolyn Newman
Dr. Hue Nguyen-Ngo (class of 1989)
Dr. Lourdes Pelaez-Echevarria (class of 1994)
Dr. Marcos Rejtman (class of 1994)
Dr. Susan Sager (class of 1989)
Dr. Patrick Sayavong (class of 1992)
Dr. Lawrence Schwartz (class of 1990)
Dr. Stuart Shalit (class of 1990)
Dr. Cindy S. Marika Srebnick (class of 1987)
Dr. Richard Thacker (class of 1992)
Dr. Linda Tripodis-Murray (class of 1988)
Dr. Todd Trites

THANK YOU

STAFF SNAPSHOT

Getting to Know: Iris Berman

Receptionist, College of Osteopathic Medicine/College of Optometry



Family facts:

Two children, Cary and Lainie, and two grandchildren, Brittney (alias Cupcake) and Samantha. Iris lives with her mother, Frances, and has a brother who also lives in Florida.

Date of hire: 11/22/98

Official NSU-COM responsibilities:

As receptionist, I greet guests and students, answer the phone, and help out wherever and whenever my two hands are needed. I also attend to various office duties.

Reasons I enjoy working at NSU-COM:

It's a truly pleasant atmosphere. I love being around the students, who represent so many different cultures, and I seem to learn something new every day.

What did you do professionally before joining the NSU-COM staff?

When I lived in New Jersey, I was a front desk supervisor for a hotel chain. When I returned to Florida, I worked in a beauty salon, running the appointment desk and catering to my clients.

Greatest achievement in life:

Having my son and daughter.

My coworkers would be surprised to know this about me:

I love to cook and gamble. When I go to a casino, my favorite way to pass the time is playing the video poker machines. They'd also be surprised to learn that I grew up in Miami, went to beauty school, and have a license in cosmetology.

Favorite way to unwind when not at work:

Play Mah Jong, bingo, and cards. I also love to watch television, especially the Lifetime channel.

If I won the lottery, I would:

Pay off all my obligations, take my family on a cruise, and spend more time with my two grandchildren, who live in New Jersey. I have to admit I would leave NSU in a heartbeat and retire!

The most frightening thing that ever happened to me:

While I was driving during a snowstorm, my car skidded and I ended up on the other side of the highway.

What was your initial response when you heard about the tragic U.S. terrorist attacks?

Shock and fear. First and foremost, you think of your children when something like this occurs. My son works in New York City in the Garment Center, and I wanted to make sure he was safe. I could not contact him or my daughter until 4:00 that afternoon.

What makes you happiest in life?

Seeing that my family and friends are healthy and happy. Then everything else falls into place.

When I retire, I plan to:

Travel with my granddaughters and see how the rich and famous live. I would sleep late in the morning and stay up all night.

Three words that best describe me:

Fun-loving, caring, and sincere.



Iris poses with her grandchildren, Samantha and Brittney.



HEALTH PROFESSIONS DIVISION
COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE
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